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القضاء والقدر

The Divine Pre-Decree & Ordainment of Allaah

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Al-Ibaanah E-Books

First Edition: August 2003

About the Book: This is a translation of a small booklet called "***Al-Qadaa wal-Qadar***" (The Divine Pre-Decree and Ordainment of Allaah), which is a lecture from Imam Muhammad bin Saalih Al-'Uthaimeen that was later transcribed and published. The current translation came from the Maktabat-ul-'Ilm edition.

In this treatise, Shaikh Ibn Al-'Uthaimeen clarifies the correct belief of Ahlus-Sunnah with regard to the Divine Pre-Decree, while refuting the false notions of some groups who deviated with regard to this issue such as the Qadariyyah, who believe that Allaah has no part in a person's actions, and the Jabariyyah, who believe that a person is forced to do perform his sayings an actions by Allaah. He then lists and discusses the four levels for believing in Allaah's Divine Pre-Decree, which are: Knowledge, Recording, Will and Creation.

By presenting this treatise, we hope to provide a basic and easy guide for beginning and intermediate students to learn and understand this fundamental aspect of the Religion, which is also one of the Six Pillars of Faith.

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FROM THE LECTURE

All praise is due to Allaah. We praise Him, we seek His assistance and we ask for His forgiveness. And we repent to Him and seek refuge in Him from the evils of our selves and our actions. Whoever Allaah guides, none can lead astray, and whoever is lead astray, none can guide him.

I bear witness that there is no deity that has the right to be worshipped except Allaah, alone and with no partner. And I bear witness that Muhammad is His slave and Messenger. Allaah sent him before the Hour as a bearer of good tidings, a warner, a caller to Allaah, by His permission, and a shining light. So he conveyed the Message and fulfilled his trust. And he sincerely advised the ummah and struggled for the sake of Allaah truthfully, until death overtook him. So may Allaah send His peace and blessings upon him, his family, Companions, and whoever follows them in goodness until the Day of Judgement.

To Proceed:

O noble brothers, in this gathering – in which we hope that Allaah will grant us the treasures of His Bounty and Mercy and make us sources of guidance, leaders of rectification and from among those who listen and benefit – we will discuss an important topic that concerns all of the Muslims. This topic is: **"Allaah's Pre-Decree and Ordainment"** (*Al-Qadaa wal-Qadar*). All praise be to Allaah, this subject is very clear. However, if it were not for the many questions on it, and the fact that many people are confused about it, and if it were not for the excess of those who speak on this matter at times truthfully and at other times falsely, and taking into consideration that the vain desires have spread and multiplied, such that the sinner uses Al-Qadaa wal-Qadar as an excuse to justify his sins – if it were not for all of this – we would not speak on this subject.

The subject of Al-Qadaa wal-Qadar has always been an issue of debate within the ummah, past and present. It has been reported that the Prophet (*sallAllaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) once came out to his Companions and found them arguing about the Divine Pre-Decree, so he forbade them from that and informed them that this kind of arguing and disagreeing destroyed the nations before them. [1]

However, Allaah granted the correct understanding of it to His believing servants, the pious predecessors (*As-Salaf as-Saalih*) who treaded the path of moderation in what they said and did. And it (the correct understanding) is that: Al-Qadaa wal-Qadar is

[1] Sunan At-Tirmidhee: Book of Divine Pre-Decree (2133) and Sunan Ibn Maajah: Introduction (85)

part of Allaah's Lordship over His creation. So it falls into one of the three divisions of Tawheed, which the scholars have divided Allaah's Oneness into:

The First Division: Tawheed Al-Uluhiyyah – It is to single Allaah out for worship (i.e. that He be worshipped alone)

The Second Division: Tawheed Ar-Rububiyyah – It is to single Allaah out in His Creating, Possessing and Administering (i.e. that He is the only Creator, Owner and Administrator).

The Third Division: Tawheed Al-Asmaa was-Sifaat – It is Allaah's Oneness with regard to His Names and Attributes.

So faith in the Divine Pre-Decree is part of Allaah's Lordship. This is why Imaam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, *rahimahullaah*, said: "Al-Qadar (The Divine Pre-Decree) is Allaah's Qudrah (Ability)." This is since it is part of His (Attribute of) Ability, and from its general aspects, without doubt. Also it is Allaah's hidden secret, of which no one has knowledge of except Allaah. It is recorded in a Preserved Tablet in a Hidden Record, which no one has access to. We don't know what Allaah has pre-decreed for us or against us, or what Allaah has pre-decreed for His creatures, except after it occurs or when we are truthfully informed of it (by way of the Qur'aan and Sunnah).

O Brothers, know that the Muslim ummah is divided into three groups with respect to Allaah's Pre-Decree:

The First Group: They went overboard in their affirmation of Allaah's Pre-Decree, denying that the human being has any ability or choice in the matter. They hold that "A person has no ability or choice – he is controlled and has no free will, just like a tree when it is blown by the wind." They do not distinguish between a person's action that occur as a result of his choice and an action of his that occurs without him choosing so. No doubt, these people are astray, because what is known from the Religion by necessity, and from the intellect and customs, is that a human being knows the difference between an action he chooses to do and an action he is forced into doing.

The Second Group: They went to extremes in their affirmation of a person's ability and choice, such that they negated Allaah having any part in Willing or Choosing or Creating what action a person does. And they claimed that a person is independently responsible for producing his action. This is such that a group amongst them went too far, saying: "Allaah does not know what actions His servants will do until after it occurs from them." These people have also gone to extremes and shown great radicalism in affirming a human being's ability and choice.

The Third Group: These are the ones who truly believe, and so Allaah has guided them concerning that which is disagreed upon from the truth. They are Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah. They have treaded the moderate path and the middle course, which is based on religious and logical proofs and evidences. And they say: The actions that Allaah introduces into existence are divided into two types:

First: The actions from Allaah that He causes to occur in His Creation. No one has any choice in regard to these actions, and they are such as when rain descends, when the earth produces vegetation, when life or death occurs, when health or sickness befalls and so on and so forth – from the many things that can be observed occurring within the creation. Without doubt, no one has any part in choosing or willing for these things to transpire, but rather it is only Allaah who wills that to happen.

Second: The actions that the creation, i.e. all of the various types of creatures that possess a willingness, do. These actions occur as a result their choosing and wanting to do them, since Allaah gave them the ability to do that, as He says:

لِمَن شَآءَ مِنكُمْ أَن يَسْتَقِيمَ

"To whoever amongst you wills to go straight." [Surah At-Takweer: 28]

And He says:

مِنكُم مَّن يُرِيدُ ٱلدُّنْيَا وَمِنكُم مَّن يُرِيدُ ٱلْأَخِرَةَ

"Among you is he who desires the worldly life and among you is he who desires the Hereafter." [Surah Aali 'Imraan: 152]

And He says:

فَمَن شَآءَ فَلْيُؤْمِن وَمَن شَآءَ فَلْيَكْفُرْ

"So whoever wishes, then let him believe, and whoever wishes then let him disbelieve." [Surah Al-Kahf: 29]

A human being knows the difference between what occurs from him as a result of his own free will and what occurs from him as a result of being compelled and forced. So for example, when a human being climbs a ladder to get to the roof of a house, he

ascends the ladder out of his own free will, and while knowing that he freely chose to do so. But when he trips and falls down from the roof, he knows that he did not choose to do that. So he can tell the difference between these two actions – that he freely chose to do the former, while he was compelled to do the latter. Every human being knows this.

Likewise, when a person is stricken with a sickness in which his urine constantly flows out, this urine comes out from him without his desiring or choosing that. But when he is in a healthy state and free from this sickness, the urine comes out from him when he wills and chooses. So he knows the difference between this and that. No one can deny the difference between the two.

And the same goes with everything else that occurs to a person – he can tell the difference between what occurs due to his free will and what occurs due to his being coerced and forced. As a matter of fact, due to Allaah's Mercy there are some actions a person may do on his own free will, yet not be held accountable for any of them, as is the case with a person when he sleeps or forgets. In the story of the people of the Cave, Allaah tells us:

وَتَحْسَبُهُمْ أَيْقَاظًا وَهُمْ رُقُودٌ ۚ وَنُقَلِّبُهُمْ ذَاتَ ٱلْيَمِينِ وَذَاتَ ٱلشِّمَالِ ۖ

"And you would have thought them to be awake whereas they were asleep. And We turned them on their right and on their left sides." [Surah Al-Kahf: 18]

They were the ones who turned around in their sleep, yet Allaah ascribes the action to Himself. This is because when a person sleeps, he has no choice or free will in his actions, and he will not be held accountable for actions done in this state, so the act is attributed to Allaah. The Prophet (*sallAllaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said: **"Whoever forgets while fasting, and eats or drinks, then he should complete his fast because it was only Allaah who fed him and gave him to drink."**[2] So he (*sallAllaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) attributed this act of feeding and quenching thirst to Allaah, because the action occurred from the individual without him being aware of it, so it is as if it happened without him choosing to do it.

All of us know the difference between when a person experiences pain or joy within himself at times without choosing so, and not knowing the reason why and between him experiencing these pains or these joys as a result of an act that he did himself. This matter, all praise be to Allaah is clear and there is no confusion over it.

[2] Saheeh Muslim: Book of Fasting (1155)

O brothers: If we were to take the view of the first group (i.e. the Jabariyyah) who went to extremes in affirming the Divine Pre-Decree, the Religion would be invalidated from its very foundation. This is since the belief that a person has no choice or free will in his actions necessitates that he not be praised for a praiseworthy act or that he be blamed for a blameworthy act, since in reality they were not done by his choice or free will. So then this would mean that Allaah, may He be far removed from it, is oppressing those who sin when He punishes and recompenses them for their acts because He has punished them for something they had no free choice or free will in! This no doubt clearly contradicts the Qur'aan. Allaah says:

وَقَالَ قَرِينُهُۥ هَٰذَا مَا لَدَىَّ عَتِيدٌ ﴿٢٣﴾ أَلْقِيَا فِى جَهَنَّمَ كُلَّ كَفَّارٍ عَنِيدٍ
﴿٢٤﴾ مَّنَّاعٍ لِّلْخَيْرِ مُعْتَدٍ مُّرِيبٍ ﴿٢٥﴾ ٱلَّذِى جَعَلَ مَعَ ٱللَّهِ إِلَٰهًا ءَاخَرَ
فَأَلْقِيَاهُ فِى ٱلْعَذَابِ ٱلشَّدِيدِ ﴿٢٦﴾ ۞ قَالَ قَرِينُهُۥ رَبَّنَا مَآ أَطْغَيْتُهُۥ وَلَٰكِن
كَانَ فِى ضَلَٰلٍۭ بَعِيدٍ ﴿٢٧﴾ قَالَ لَا تَخْتَصِمُوا۟ لَدَىَّ وَقَدْ قَدَّمْتُ
إِلَيْكُم بِٱلْوَعِيدِ ﴿٢٨﴾ مَا يُبَدَّلُ ٱلْقَوْلُ لَدَىَّ وَمَآ أَنَا۠ بِظَلَّٰمٍ لِّلْعَبِيدِ

"And his companion (angel) will say: 'Here is (his record) ready with me!' (Allaah will say to the angels): 'Both of you, throw into the Hellfire every stubborn disbeliever, hinderer of good, transgressor, doubter, he who set up another god with Allaah. So both of you cast him into the Severe Torment.' His (devil) companion will say: 'Our Lord! I did not push him to transgress, but rather it was he himself who was in error, far astray. Allaah will say: 'Do not dispute in front of Me, I had already sent the threat to you in advance. The Word (Ordainment) that comes from Me cannot be changed, and I am not unjust to the slaves.'" [Surah Qaaf: 23-29]

So Allaah clarifies that this punishment is not oppression from Him, but rather that it is complete justice since He had previously given them a warning and clarified to them the various paths and explained the truth and falsehood to them, but they chose for themselves the path of falsehood. So there didn't remain any proof for them before Allaah.

And if we were to take this false view, it would invalidate Allaah's statement:

رُّسُلًا مُّبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ لِئَلَّا يَكُونَ لِلنَّاسِ عَلَى ٱللَّهِ حُجَّةٌۢ بَعْدَ ٱلرُّسُلِ

"Messengers, bearing glad tidings and warning in order that mankind would not have any argument (i.e. proof) against Allaah after the (coming of) Messengers." [Surah An-Nisaa: 165]

Allaah denies that mankind should have any excuses after the sending of Messengers because the proof has been established against them with that. So if the Divine Pre-Decree was an excuse for them, this excuse would be infinite even after the advent of the messengers since Allaah's Pre-Decree did not cease and will not cease to exist before and after the sending of messengers. So therefore, this view is invalidated by the religious texts, and it is invalidated by reality, as we have explained in the previous examples.

As for those who hold the second view, then the religious texts and reality also refute them since the texts clearly state that a person's will is subject to Allaah's Will:

لِمَن شَآءَ مِنكُمْ أَن يَسْتَقِيمَ ﴿٢٨﴾ وَمَا تَشَآءُونَ إِلَّآ أَن يَشَآءَ ٱللَّهُ رَبُّ ٱلْعَٰلَمِينَ

"To whoever amongst you wills to go straight. However, you cannot will unless Allaah, Lord of the Universe, wills." [Surah At-Takweer: 28-29]

وَرَبُّكَ يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَآءُ وَيَخْتَارُ

"And your Lord creates whatever He wills and chooses." [Surah Al-Qasas: 68]

وَٱللَّهُ يَدْعُوٓا۟ إِلَىٰ دَارِ ٱلسَّلَٰمِ وَيَهْدِى مَن يَشَآءُ إِلَىٰ صِرَٰطٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ

"And Allaah calls (you) to the Abode of Peace, and guides whomever He wills to the Straight Path." [Surah Yoonus: 25]

Those who hold this view (i.e. the Qadariyyah) are in reality invalidating one of the aspects of Allaah's Lordship, and they are also claiming that there can be found in Allaah's dominion that which Allaah did not will or create, when in fact Allaah wills everything, creates everything and has pre-decreed everything. They also contradict that which is known by necessity, which is that everything that is created belongs to

Allaah, their essence as well as their attributes, there being no distinction between the attribute and the essence. Therefore, everything belongs to Allaah so it is not possible for there to be anything in His dominion that He did not desire. So what path should a person take and what is his solution if Allaah has pre-decreed that He go astray and not be guided?

We say: The answer to this is that Allaah only guides those who deserve to be guided, and He leads astray only those who deserve to be led astray. Allaah says:

فَلَمَّا زَاغُوٓا۟ أَزَاغَ ٱللَّهُ قُلُوبَهُمْ

“So when they turned away, Allaah turned their hearts away.” [Surah As-Saff: 5]

And He says:

فَبِمَا نَقْضِهِم مِّيثَٰقَهُمْ لَعَنَّٰهُمْ وَجَعَلْنَا قُلُوبَهُمْ قَٰسِيَةً ۖ يُحَرِّفُونَ
ٱلْكَلِمَ عَن مَّوَاضِعِهِۦ ۙ وَنَسُوا۟ حَظًّا مِّمَّا ذُكِّرُوا۟ بِهِۦ ۚ

“So because they breached their covenant, We cursed them and made their hearts grow hard. They change the words from their (right) places and have abandoned a good part of the Message that was sent to them.” [Surah Al-Maa’idah: 13]

So Allaah clarified that what caused the person to go astray was himself. A person, as we have explained previously, doesn’t know what Allaah has pre-decreed for him since he doesn’t know what has been pre-decreed until after it occurs. So he doesn’t know if Allaah has decreed for him to be astray or guided. So if this is the case, how can he take the path of misguidance, then use as an excuse the argument that this is what Allaah willed for him? Wouldn’t it be more befitting for him to tread the path of guidance and then say that Allah has guided me to the Straight Path?

Is it right for him to be a Jabaree, i.e. claim that he is forced, when he is misguided, and a Qadaree, i.e. that Allaah has no part in his deeds, when he obeys?! Never! Il does not befit a person to claim that he was forced when he finds himself upon misguidance and sin. So when he goes astray and disobeys Allaah, he says: “This is something that has been written and pre-decreed for me, and I am not able to remove myself from what Allaah has ordained for me.” Yet when he does good deeds and

Allaah grants him obedience and guidance, he claims that this came solely from himself, saying: "I attained this by myself." So he becomes a Qadaree when it comes to guidance and a Jabaree when it comes to disobedience. This is not possible ever.

So in reality, a person has ability and will. The door to guidance is not any more hidden than the door to sustenance and the door to seeking knowledge. A person, as is well known to everybody, has pre-decreed for him whatever he has from sustenance. But yet in spite of this, he strives for the means of sustenance in his country and outside of it, on the right and on the left. He doesn't just sit at home and say: "Provision has been pre-decreed for me and it will come to me." On the contrary, he strives for the means of sustenance.

Yet sustenance itself goes hand and hand with actions/works, as has been authentically reported on the Prophet, in the narration of Ibn Mas'ood, who said that he (*sallAllaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said: **"Verily, the creation of each of you is brought together in his mother's womb for forty days in the form of a seed. Then he becomes a clot of blood for the same amount of time, then a morsel of flesh for the same amount of time. Then an angel is sent to him and commanded with four things: to record his sustenance, his lifespan, his actions, and whether he will be miserable or happy."** [3]

So this sustenance is written just as the good and evil actions are written. So how is it that you can go here and there, traversing land and sea, seeking the sustenance of the world and yet you don't perform any righteous deed seeking the sustenance of the Hereafter or the success of Paradise? Indeed, these two aspects are one and the same. There is no difference between the two of them. So likewise, you strive for your sustenance and you strive for your livelihood and to prolong your lifespan.

But when you become ill with a sickness, you travel through all the regions of the world looking for a skilled doctor who will cure your sickness. This is even though whatever has been pre-decreed for you as your lifespan will come to be and it will not increase or decrease. Yet you do not rely on this and say: "I will remain sick and bedridden at home, and if Allaah has decreed that my lifespan will be prolonged, then it will be prolonged." Rather, we will find you striving with all of your might and energy to find a doctor whom you regard will be the best one at whose hands Allaah will ordain your recovery. So why don't you do acts for the Hereafter and righteous deeds the same way you do acts for this worldly life?

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[3] Saheeh Al-Bukhaaree: Book of the Beginning of Creation (3208) and Saheeh Muslim: Book of Divine Pre-Decree (2643)

We stated previously that: The Divine Pre-Ordainment is a hidden secret, you have no way of finding out about it. So right now, you are between two paths – a path that will take you to salvation and success, and a path that will take you to destruction and regret. So right now, you are standing between these two paths with a free choice. There is no one in front of you preventing you from taking the right path or the left path. If you wish, you can go here, and if you wish, you can go there. So how can you take the left path and say: "This has been pre-decreed for me!" Isn't it more befitting for you to take the right path and say: "This has been pre-decreed for me?!"

And if you want to go on a journey to some other country and before you lies two roads, one of which is paved, short and safe, while the other is unpaved, long and dangerous, we would find you choosing the short, paved and safe road and not the other one. So this figurative road is similar to it and doesn't differ from it at all. However, it is the souls and desires that sometimes govern and take over the mind. The believer must take over and control his desires. And when his mind judges, the mind, according to its correct meaning, should prevent a person from what harms it and lead it to what benefits and pleases it.

With this it becomes clear that people have a free choice when it comes to their actions, and that they are not coerced. And just as he has a free choice in the acts of his worldly affairs, if he wills he will put out this product or make that his business, then likewise he has a free choice with regard to the affairs of the Hereafter. In fact, the paths of the Hereafter are clearer by far than the paths of this worldly life, because the One who clarifies the paths of the Hereafter is Allaah, in His Book and upon the tongue of His Messenger (*sallAllaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*). So the paths of the Hereafter are clearer and more lucid than the paths of the worldly life. But in spite of this, people still tread the paths of the worldly life, which have no guaranteed results and abandon the paths of the Hereafter, whose results are guaranteed and known since they are affirmed by Allaah's promise, and Allaah does not break His promises.

Having said this, we say that Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah affirm all of this and make it their Creed and Belief that: A person acts on his own free will and says what he wants. However, his desire and choosing are subject to Allaah's Will and Desire. Furthermore, Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah believe that Allaah's Will is subject to His Wisdom, and that it is not a pure and absolute Will, but rather a will that is dependent on His Wisdom. This is because one of Allaah's Names is Al-Hakeem (The Most-Wise), and the Most-Wise is the One who judges matters precisely realistically and religiously.

And based on His Wisdom, He decrees guidance for the one who desires it and for the one whom He knows wants the truth and whose heart is upon steadfastness. And He

decrees misguidance for the one who is not like this – the one who when Islaam is presented to him, his heart becomes constricted as if he were being forced to ascend to the sky. So Allaah's Wisdom refuses to let this person be from among the guided, unless Allaah renews his determination for him and changes his desire to another desire. And Allaah is Able to do all things. However, Allaah's Wisdom insists that the causes be closely linked to the effects.

According to Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah, there are four levels to the Divine Ordainment and Pre-Decree:

1. Knowledge: A person must believe with firm faith that Allaah is Aware of everything and that He knows what is in the heavens and the earth, generally and specifically, whether that comes as a result of His action or the action of His creations. And he must believe that nothing in the heaven or the earth remains hidden from Him.

2. Recording: He must believe that Allaah recorded the pre-decree of everything in the Preserved Tablet that is with Him.

Allaah combined these two levels in His saying:

أَلَمْ تَعْلَمْ أَنَّ ٱللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِى ٱلسَّمَآءِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ ۗ إِنَّ ذَٰلِكَ فِى كِتَٰبٍ ۚ إِنَّ
ذَٰلِكَ عَلَى ٱللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ ﴿٧٠﴾

"Don't you know that Allaah knows what is in the heaven and the earth? Verily, that is recorded in a Book (Preserved Tablet). Verily, that is easy for Allaah." [Surah Al-Hajj: 70]

Allaah began by mentioning knowledge and then went on to say that it is in a Book, i.e. it is recorded in the Preserved Tablet, as is stated in the hadeeth from Allaah's Messenger (*sallAllaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*): **"Verily, the first thing Allaah created was the pen. He said to it: 'Write.' It replied: 'My Lord, what should I write?' So He said: 'Write all that will occur.' So in that hour, everything that will occur until the Day of Recompense was recorded."** [4]

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[4] Sunan Abu Dawood: Book of Sunnah (4700) and Sunan At-Tirmidhee: Book of Divine Pre-Decree (2155)

This is why the Prophet was asked about each deed we do – is it something in the future or is it something that has occurred already and come to an end? He said it has already been ordained and come to an end.[5] And when he (*sallAllaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) was asked: "Should we then not abandon doing deeds and just rely on what has already been recorded for us originally?" He replied: **"Do deeds, for everyone will be facilitated to do that which he was created for."**[6] Therefore, the Prophet (*sallAllaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) ordered them to do deeds, so you, O brother, should also do deeds and you will be facilitated to do that which you were created for.

Then the Prophet (*sallAllaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) recited Allaah's saying:

فَأَمَّا مَنْ أَعْطَىٰ وَاتَّقَىٰ ﴿٥﴾ وَصَدَّقَ بِالْحُسْنَىٰ ﴿٦﴾ فَسَنُيَسِّرُهُ لِلْيُسْرَىٰ
﴿٧﴾ وَأَمَّا مَن بَخِلَ وَاسْتَغْنَىٰ ﴿٨﴾ وَكَذَّبَ بِالْحُسْنَىٰ ﴿٩﴾ فَسَنُيَسِّرُهُ
لِلْعُسْرَىٰ ﴿١٠﴾ وَمَا يُغْنِي عَنْهُ مَالُهُ إِذَا تَرَدَّىٰ ﴿١١﴾ إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا لَلْهُدَىٰ ﴿١٢﴾

"As for he who gives in charity and keeps his duty to Allaah, fearing Him and believing that he will see Him in the Hereafter, We will facilitate for him the path of ease. However, he who is a greedy miser and thinks himself to be self-sufficient, not believing that he will see Allaah in the Hereafter, We will facilitate for him the path of evil." [Surah Al-Layl: 5-10]

3. Will: This means that Allaah willed everything that exists or doesn't exist in the heavens and in the earth. So nothing in existence exists except due to Allaah's Will, and nothing non-existent doesn't exist except due to Allaah's Will. This understanding is apparent in the noble Qur'aan. Allaah has affirmed His Will in His actions as well as in the actions of His servants, as He says:

لِمَن شَاءَ مِنكُمْ أَن يَسْتَقِيمَ ﴿٢٨﴾ وَمَا تَشَاءُونَ إِلَّا أَن يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ

"To whoever amongst you wills to go straight. However, you cannot will unless Allaah, Lord of the Universe, wills." [Surah At-Takweer: 28-29]

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[5] Musnad Ahmad (1/29) and Sunan At-Tirmidhee: Book of Qur'anic Explanation (3111)

[6] Saheeh Al-Bukhaaree: Book of Funerals (1362) and Saheeh Muslim: Book of Divine Pre-Decree (2647)

وَلَوْ شَآءَ رَبُّكَ مَا فَعَلُوهُ

"If your Lord had willed so, they would not have done it." [Surah Al-An'aam: 112]

وَلَوْ شَآءَ ٱللَّهُ مَا ٱقْتَتَلُوا۟ وَلَٰكِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يَفْعَلُ مَا يُرِيدُ

"If Allaah had willed, they would not have fought each other. But Allaah does what He desires." [Surah Al-Baqarah: 253]

Sa Allaah clarifies that people's actions occur because of Allaah's willing that. As for His own actions, then the proofs are many. Allaah says:

وَلَوْ شِئْنَا لَءَاتَيْنَا كُلَّ نَفْسٍ هُدَىٰهَا

"And if We had willed, We would have granted every person his guidance." [Surah Als-Sajdah: 13]

وَلَوْ شَآءَ رَبُّكَ لَجَعَلَ ٱلنَّاسَ أُمَّةً وَٰحِدَةً

"And if your Lord had so willed, He could surely have made mankind one nation." [Surah Hood: 118]

There are many more Qur'aanic verses that affirm Allaah's Will in His actions. So our belief in the Divine Pre-Decree cannot be complete unless we believe that Allaah's Will encompasses everything that exists or doesn't exist. So there is nothing in non-existence except that Allaah willed for it not to exist. And there is nothing that exists except that Allaah willed for it to exist. Furthermore, it is not possible for anything to occur in the heavens or in the earth except by Allaah's Will.

4. Creation: This means that we must believe Allaah created everything. So there is nothing that exists in the heavens and the earth except that Allaah created it. Even death, since Allaah creates it, even though it is the absence of life. Allaah says:

ٱلَّذِى خَلَقَ ٱلْمَوْتَ وَٱلْحَيَوٰةَ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا

"He who created death and life in order to test you as to which of you performs the best deeds." [Surah Al-Mulk: 2]

So everything in the heavens or in the earth was indeed created by Allaah. There is no creator besides Allaah. All of us know that whatever occurs is from His actions, since that thing occurring is a creation of His. So the heavens and the earth, and the mountains and the rivers, and the sun and the moon, and the stars and the wind, and humans and animals – all of them are creations of Allaah. And likewise, whatever occurs to and from these creations, whether they be attributes, movements, and states of being – all of them are also creations of Allaah. This may be hard to understand for some people – how is it correct for us to say that we have a free choice in what we do and say, when they are created by Allaah?

We say: Yes, it is correct to say this, since our statements and actions come about as a result of two things:

1. Ability
2. Desire

So since a person's actions result from his desire and ability, then indeed the One who created this desire and made a person's heart receptive of the desire is none other than Allaah. Likewise, the One who created the ability in him is also Allaah. He is the One who creates the complete basis from which end products emanate. We hold that the Creator of the complete cause is also the Creator of the effect. So with regard to Him being the Creator of a person's actions, we say that a person's statements and actions are the result of two things: Desire and Ability.

So if he did not desire something, he would not do it. And likewise if he was not able to do something, he would not do it. This is because if he desired to do something but was unable to do it, he would not do it because of his inability to do it. And if he was able to do it, but didn't want to (i.e. had no desire to do it), he would also not do it. So since an action comes from a firm desire and a complete ability, then the One who creates this firm desire and complete ability is Allaah.

By this, we come to understand how it is possible for us to say that Allaah is the Creator of His servant's actions, but in reality, it is the servant who performs the actions. So he is the one who purifies himself and prays, he is the one who gives Zakaat and fasts and makes Hajj and 'Umrah and disobeys and obeys. However, all of these actions exist because of his desire and ability, which are both creations of Allaah. This matter is very clear, all praise be to Allaah.

We are obligated to affirm these four levels, just mentioned, for Allaah. This does not negate the fact that the deed is ascribed to the one who does it, from those who possess will and desire.

In another example, we say that fire burns, but without doubt, it is Allaah who creates the power of burning. So a fire does not burn on its own, but rather it burns because Allaah causes it to burn. This is why the fire that Ibraaheem was placed into (by the polytheists of his time) did not burn him, since Allaah said to it:

كُونِي بَرْدًا وَسَلَـٰمًا عَلَىٰٓ إِبْرَٰهِيمَ

"Be you cool and safe upon Ibraaheem!" [Surah Al-Anbiyaa: 69]

So it was cool and safe upon Ibraaheem. Therefore, fire in and of itself does not cause burns, but rather it is Allaah who creates in it the ability to burn (things). The ability to burn (things) as compared to a person's actions is like that person's desire and ability. Thus, with desire and ability there results action, and with a flammable object in the fire, there results burning. So there is no difference between this and that. So since a person possesses desire, feelings, free choice, and the ability to act, the deed (he performs) becomes ascribed to him in reality and in ruling and he is responsible for any opposition (to Allaah's Laws) and will be punished for it. This is because he does and leaves off doing according to his own free will.

Lastly, we say: The believer must be pleased with Allaah as his Lord. And one's contentment with Allaah's Lordship cannot be unless he believes in His Divine Pre-Decree and Ordainment. And he must know that there is no difference in this between the actions he does, the sustenance he strives after, and the lifespan he guards. All of these are one and the same – they are all written and pre-decreed.

I ask Allaah to make us from those who do the deeds of the people of success, and to record for us prosperity in this world and in the Hereafter. All praise be to Allaah, Lord of the Worlds, and may the peace and blessings be on our prophet, Muhammad, his family and all of his Companions.

[End of Lecture]